

Date: 21st March 2018

Report: Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan (2019 – 2024)

Written by: Rob Fairbanks, Surrey Hills AONB Director

Purpose of Report

To agree the programme for the review and adoption of the new AONB Management Plan (2019 – 2024)

Background

Sections 89 and 90 of the CRow Act (2000) require local authorities and Conservation Boards to produce AONB Management Plans and to review adopted and published plans at intervals of not more than five years. A new Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan will need to be adopted by local authorities in 2019. The current Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan (2014 – 2019) is fit for purpose and has been adopted by the local authorities and submitted to the Secretary of State. Consequently, and because many changes to the Management Plan policies are unlikely, a 'light touch' review seems the most appropriate approach. It will however be an opportunity to review progress on implementing the Management Plan and to consider aligning the Board's governance, funding and Business Plan in the Management Plan review process.

A key 25 Year Environment Plan initiative is that the Government will be setting up a commission in 2019 to review whether National Parks and AONBs are fit for purpose. As this is not likely to report until after the AONB Management Plan is adopted, this is further justification as to why there should not be fundamental changes to the existing structure at this stage. Depending upon the outcome of this review it may be necessary to review the 2019 – 2024 earlier than would otherwise have been the case.

Opportunities will be taken to link the AONB Management Plan review, particularly engaging a wider audience in the consultation, with the celebrations of the 60th Anniversary of the designation in 2018 and the 70th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act in 2019. This will include the Into the Hills and Surrey Unearthed arts programme which will be profiled through publications and promotional activities.

Resource and Financial Considerations

The AONB Director will project manage the Management Plan review with the support of the AONB Unit. This will include the Planning Adviser advising on policy; the Office and Finance Manager for the administration of the Expert Panels; the Working Group Coordinator supporting the consultation (including Survey Monkey); and the Communications Lead for the PR including document design and developing a new micro website for the Surrey Hills AONB Board.

The Officers Working Group will be supporting the Expert Panels and preparing Committee reports for the consultation and adoption of the AONB Management Plan, the Constitution and the Delivery Plan.

A financial allocation will need to be found out of the Defra single-pot for consultancy work, publishing (print and / or website) and promotion associated with the Management Plan. Surrey University has offered

MSC student support through dissertation topics and a range of topics are currently being considered including condition monitoring, natural capital audits and fixed point photography/ video.

Management Plan Review Programme

This programme sets out the key dates and activities for the preparation, review, consultation, adoption and promotion of the new AONB Management Plan. Members of the Board are asked to support and Chair the expert panels.

Date	Activity	Action
March 2018	Agree the programme and recommend a Member Chair and Lead Officers (in brackets) for each of the following Expert Panels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farming (Sandra Nichols and Clive Smith) Woodlands (Matthew Woodcock and Sean Harrison) Nature conservation (John Edwards and Sarah Jane Chimbwandira) Historic and cultural heritage (Tony Howe and Rod Shaw) Recreation, access and tourism (Lisa Creaye-Griffin) Land use planning (Clive Smith and Matthew Ellis) Transport and traffic (Clive Smith and Jeff Wilson) Community development and the local economy (Jason Gaskell) 	AONB Board
May / June 2018	Expert Panel / thematic workshops. To recommend changes to the statements of significance, policies and actions for each theme based on a review of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> policy and strategy context evidence base the delivery of AONB Management Plan (2014 – 2019) Report progress to the Surrey Hills AONB Board on 13th June.	Expert Panels
July	Review AONB Board Constitution, including structure, representation, AONB team, chairing and funding formulae	Officers Working Group
August	Write up new consultation AONB Management Plan	AONB Director
August 18	Undertake a scoping report to confirm whether a Sustainability Appraisal is required by Natural England	Peer review
Sept 18.	Agree Consultation Draft and consultation arrangements, including Survey Monkey and promotional events	AONB Board
Oct / Nov 18	Launch Consultation Draft. Potential to be part of Surrey Hills symposium at Surrey University. Also keen to engage young people through the Into the Hills project, which is subject to HLF funding	AONB Chairman
Oct - Jan	Prepare reports for Constituent Bodies on Management Plan consultation, constitutional changes and business plan	Officers Working Group
March 19	Submit Report of Consultations and recommendations for amendments to Management Plan, business plan and governance arrangements to Board	AONB Director
April 19	Natural England Formal Comments on Management Plan	Natural England
April - July	Prepare reports for Constituent Bodies on Management Plan adoption, constitutional changes and business plan 2019 - 2024	Officers Working Group
September 19	Adopt new AONB Management Plan. To agree arrangements for publication and launch; adopt constitution and governance; and agree business plan	AONB Board AGM
October 19	Publish and launch Management Plan, including Executive Summary and web version	AONB Unit

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Agree the programme for the review and adoption of the new AONB Management Plan (2019 – 2024)
- Nominate Chairs for the Expert Panel